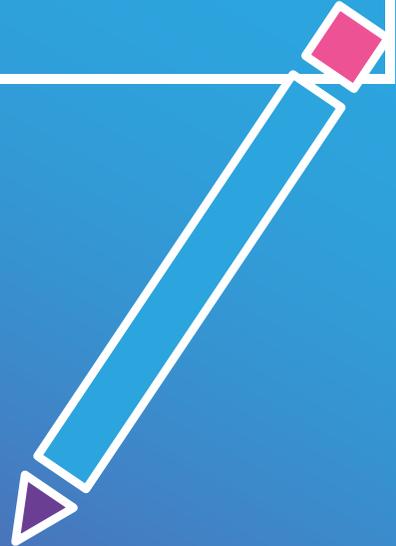


**AbMeriBaari**

# **LEARNINGS**

**FROM SOCIAL AUDIT  
CONDUCTED WITH GIRL CHAMPIONS**



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- AN OVERVIEW -

# AbMeriBaari

## A GIRLS-LED MOVEMENT TO MAKE STAKEHOLDERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR ADOLESCENT-FOCUSED POLICIES AND PROGRAMS.

The overarching goal of the campaign in the next three years is to increase the efficacy and agency of girls (between the age group of 10–19 years), delay age at marriage, delay age at first pregnancy and ensure completion of secondary education.

Ab Meri Baari engaged with 300 Girl Champions\* in the states of Rajasthan and Jharkhand. The campaign followed a two-pronged strategy of creating a localized state-based **accountability** narrative and then bolstering it with **momentum** to demand for change at both the national and state level.

This document attempts to describe the key strategies used in the campaign, with a special focus on the social audit tool, to enable organizations that work with adolescents to gain a deeper understanding of the audit tool.

\* Ab Meri Baari Girl Champions are a group of adolescent girls selected to represent their villages from Rajasthan and Jharkhand.

# THREE PHASES OF THE CAMPAIGN



## PHASE 1

Creating National momentum around adolescent issues



## PHASE 2

Empowering adolescents to demand accountability for their rights through social audits.



## PHASE 3

Disseminating a Charter of Recommendations created by Girl CHampions through a Bus Journey



# FOUR KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN DESIGN

## SOCIAL AUDIT

With the objective of driving social accountability, and increasing the efficacy and agency of adolescents, 300 Girl Champions were trained to design and conduct a social audit to assess schemes and services in the areas of health, education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, nutrition, and safety. The data collected through the social audit was aggregated into a Charter of Recommendations, in where the demands generated by the Girl Champions were backed by evidence from the field.

## LETTER WRITING

The tool focused on providing a voice to Girl Champions and building channels of accountability with government representatives for better service delivery in schemes related to adolescents. The challenges faced by these girls were shared with local government authorities, on-ground workers and community leaders.

## GRAM VAANI

To complement the on-ground events, Ab Meri Baari partnered with Gram Vaani to launch an Interactive Voice Response Service (IVRS) for driving awareness and engagement amongst adolescents on Government schemes and services meant for them. The IVRS tool was used to create weekly audio-based episodes to convey key themes and messages as well as interact with the adolescents.

## BUS JOURNEY

A bus journey was carried out across three states with events planned in seven locations. During the journey, Girl Champions shared the Charter of Recommendations, their first-hand experiences and stories with other adolescents, community members, media and government to create awareness.



- DEEP DIVE -

# SOCIAL AUDIT

**The campaign focused on a community-based social audit exercise that engaged Girl Champions to assess, review, garner input and provide recommendations on the services catering to adolescents.**

The social audit was planned as a village-level scorecard, conducted by girls in their communities, to assess the functionality or gaps in adolescent-focused schemes and policies by the government.

The scorecard took into account a simple premise that government schemes exist to provide all citizens their basic rights to education, healthcare, food, nutrition and protection. However, if the services are not reaching the citizens, then it must be owing to the challenges on both the demand side and supply side.

The community may not be aware of the services they are entitled to or about the underlying issue altogether, which could lead to a constraint in demand for the very services.

Similarly, there may be challenges on the supply side too, such as lack of accountability on part of the service provider to the community and an effective channel of governance that ensures smooth functioning of the whole service delivery mechanism. The absence of one or all of these factors may lead to the inaccessibility of services or even a deterioration in service quality.

**THE SOCIAL AUDIT WORKS AS A MECHANISM THAT HELPS ADDRESS CONCERNS OF SERVICE DELIVERY, THEREBY PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY, PARTICIPATION, CONSULTATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND REDRESSAL.**

“

The relevance of the social audit is that if you are engaging with the government, your demands have to be supported by strong basis and evidence. It is better if there is a number which can support your arguments. The idea behind the Social Audit in Ab Meri Baari was to understand ways in which mechanisms are functioning at the ground level. Since this is a schematic audit, we focused on the government's priorities and frameworks. The idea was to make the government accountable towards its own mandate

**TECHNICAL PARTNER IN THE AB MERI BAARI CAMPAIGN**

“

The strength of the program is this sense of collectivization and community amidst the Girl Champions. This is very important. A single girl may never be able to stand up for her rights. However, when there are three-four girls together, it makes a difference. These girls come from a background where they understood what it felt like to not have access to services. Therefore, the girls were able to relate to each other.

**FACILITATORS AT THE SOCIAL AUDIT WORKSHOPS**

“

I am a peer educator, so I knew about the topics covered under the Ab Meri Baari initiative broadly. However, I learnt about these topics in greater detail after joining the campaign. For example, I did not know about the services available for us adolescents at the village level. Now I know about our rights. I am also able to discuss these things more freely due to greater confidence. This knowledge we got will stay with us for a long time and be of help to us.

**GIRL CHAMPION, AGED 17**

# FEATURES OF THE SOCIAL AUDIT TOOL



The social audit tool focused on the following five themes: Health, Education, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Child Safety and Nutrition. The themes were shortlisted in consultation with Girl Champions, wherein they first identified issues at district level, that were further collated into themes.



For each theme, the Girl Champions also identified three government stakeholders whom they would want to engage with, and collect data from at a village and block level.



The scorecard used in the social audit tool was based on the guiding principle “leave no one behind”, which is derived from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



The participatory nature of the social audit tool educated the Girl Champions and other participating stakeholders on the government schemes that they were entitled to.



The results of the social audit were aggregated in a report card format that was further collated into a Charter of Recommendations that captured data, first-hand experience and recommendations.



The partner organisations\* selected Girl Champions to undertake scorecard exercise in their villages. The Girl Champions, aged 15-21 years, were selected on the basis of their current leadership position and influence in their villages, interest in building their skills and participating in a voluntary exercise. They took necessary actions to ensure informed consent of Girl Champions was taken prior to the commencement of Ab Meri Baari.

\* Partner organizations comprise of Child In Need Institute, Center for Catalyzing Change and Quest Alliance in Jharkhand and ARAVALI and Magic Bus in Rajasthan

# METHODOLOGY AND PROCESSES

## STEP 1 PRELIMINARY SCOPING

- A broad analysis of available schemes related to adolescents in the states of Jharkhand and Rajasthan was carried out by technical partner Praxis.
- The partner organisations selected districts, blocks and villages based on the geographies of current implementation of government schemes and areas of non-profit intervention.

## STEP 2 TRAINING OF TRAINERS

- A series of workshops was conducted in the capital cities of Jharkhand and Rajasthan where Girl Champions and program staff participated in the development and orientation of the scorecard and analysis of the results.
- The development of the scorecard included exercises for theme finalization as well as village, stakeholder and indicator mapping. The orientation to the scorecard format included finalization of the tool and practice sessions.
- The Girl Champions and program staff further trained other Girl Champions in using the tool in their respective districts and blocks.

## STEP 3 VILLAGE-LEVEL SCORECARD

- The social audit was first piloted with the support of Praxis, so the Girl Champions and partner organisations could familiarize themselves with the tool. During this initial phase of data collection, the teams visited each district for a day to support the data collection process.
- Thereafter, the audit was progressively rolled out by the Girl Champions with support from the partner organisations.

## STEP 4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

- A two-day analysis workshop was conducted, wherein the scorecard results were aggregated in a reportcard format.
- Girl Champions prioritized top 10-12 questions from the scorecard that were important to girls and partners for their local context, and then aggregated and drafted into a **Charter of Recommendations**.
- During this analysis workshop, the Girl Champions also wrote letters to different service providers and expressed themselves, citing findings from the social audit.

## STEP 5 MOMENTUM FOR RAISING ACCOUNTABILITY

- Girl Champions presented the Charter of Recommendations to multiple stakeholders including government officials, community members, media and civil society.

# TAKEAWAYS FROM **AbMeriBaari** AND THE SOCIAL AUDIT



## EMPOWERMENT AND AGENCY

The initiative helped boost confidence and enhanced agency among the Girl Champions.



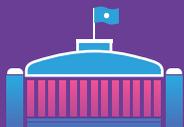
## AWARENESS GENERATION

Awareness was built on key thematic areas and service provisions for adolescent health and well-being among stakeholders who engaged with the wider campaign.



## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Government officials and community members were open to engaging with the Girl Champions both at the scorecard and result sharing stage.



## **FIRST EXPOSURE**

In a first, Girl Champions were given an opportunity to interview and engage with block, district and state-level government officials.



## **FORMATION OF A PEER GROUP**

A sense of collectivization and camaraderie was formed among Girl Champions during the course of the campaign.



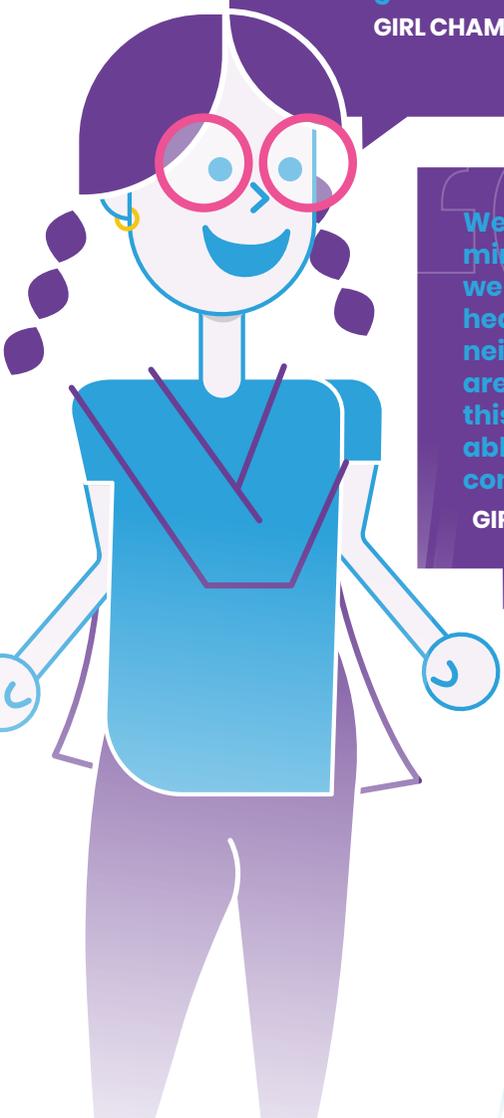
## **NARRATIVE IN THE MEDIA**

Voices of the Girl Champions were brought to the fore, and the adolescent demographic was amplified in the media narrative.



## **NEW ENGAGEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS**

The campaign showcased novel approaches for portraying adolescents as agents of change to the community, government and the media.

A stylized illustration of a girl with dark hair in two braids, wearing red-rimmed glasses, a blue t-shirt, and purple pants. She has a yellow earring and is smiling. The background is a dark purple gradient with faint white outlines of other people.

I didn't know much about sexual and reproductive health or child protection. I now understand the importance of knowing about these topics. I can educate my younger sister about these topics and it will be beneficial for her. It is important for all adolescents to have this information. I am glad this initiative gave me exposure to these topics.

**GIRL CHAMPION, AGED 20**

A stylized illustration of a girl with dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt and purple pants, with her right hand raised. She has a red earring and is smiling. The background is a dark purple gradient with faint white outlines of other people.

We had reservations about speaking our minds before. But through this initiative, we have gained confidence. When we heard of a child marriage in the neighbouring village, a group of us who are part of the Kishori Samooh, escalated this matter to the village head. We were able to take this step due to the increased confidence we felt within ourselves.

**GIRL CHAMPION, AGED 20**



In the first training workshop, my mother accompanied me to the venue because it was my first time away from family. After observing the workshop and meeting with the facilitators, she felt assured and was able to trust the program. Ever since, she has sent me alone to the workshops. It is a big deal for my family to allow me to travel around 14 kilometres alone by public transportation. This has boosted my confidence.

**GIRL CHAMPION, AGED 19**



The community began to recognise the Girls Champion, whether from their uniform t-shirts or because of their regular interactions with duty bearers. This not only empowered the girls but also empowered the community on various issues. When girls spoke, they spoke the language of the community. We speak more theoretically. The realities of the field were being reflected. Through the girls, the messages were truly percolating to the community. Similarly, when we were reaching out to the government officials also, this was reflected. When our staff approaches government officials, they feel we will only talk about the negativities. However, when the girls spoke, the acceptance was higher. For example, when the Block Education Officer in a particular block was informed about inconsistencies in the mid-day meal system and school books, she called the village school immediately and asked for records to be shared with her. If we had said the same thing, it would be taken as a challenge to her credibility.

**SENIOR STAKEHOLDER FROM AN  
IMPLEMENTING PARTNER ORGANIZATION**

# KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE SOCIAL AUDIT

## PARTICIPATORY METHODS

Developing tools and processes together with the community members encourages participation as well as helps in building ownership amongst stakeholders and partners involved in the program.

- End-to-end involvement of Girl Champions gave them ownership of all processes, and championed authentic voices from the communities.

## SUPPORT & FEEDBACK

While working with adolescents, program and field staff play a key role in helping them navigate the larger ecosystem of stakeholders and community gatekeepers.

- The handholding support provided by the program staff helped the Girl Champions feel empowered and build communication skills like writing and public speaking as part of the social audit process.

## NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS

Leveraging strengths and networks and forging partnerships where there are skill/ knowledge gaps can enable effective on-ground execution.

- The pre-existing relationships with the government helped in seeking their participation in the processes undertaken.

## COMPLEMENT ONGOING PROGRAMS

Layering the girls-led social audit process with the ongoing programmatic interventions can accelerate the impact of traditional programming.

- Organizations working on adolescent-focused programs were able to build on their interventions through community mobilization, participation, trainings, and other innovative campaign techniques.

## BE AGILE AND INNOVATIVE

Accounting for externalities like local events, festivals, elections and being agile while addressing any challenge is key to completion of processes such as social audits due to the wide range of stakeholders involved.

- The implementing partners were able to schedule the social audit process with stakeholders well in advance to avoid potential delays due to the then upcoming state elections in Jharkhand.

# AbMeriBaari

[www.abmeribaari.in](http://www.abmeribaari.in)

**3 STATES**

**7 LOCATIONS**

**3296 KILOMETRES  
OF BUS JOURNEY**

**300 GIRL CHAMPIONS**

**85 SOCIAL AUDITS  
COMPLETED**

**1485 ATTENDEES**

**13 GOVERNMENT  
REPRESENTATIVES**

**4.5 MEDIA READERSHIP  
MILLION**

**1.8 SOCIAL  
MEDIA REACH  
LAKH**

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## NOTES



# 10to19 Community

DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE

**SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE 10TO19 COMMUNITY  
OF PRACTICE FOR ALL THEIR SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION.**